

Amendment Dated September 27, 2006

Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listings of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

1. (currently amended) A method of fabricating at least one polycrystalline silicon plate ~~[[68, 70]]~~ with one ~~[[64, 66]]~~ of its two faces presenting predetermined relief, said method comprising the steps of:

~~depositing in which method~~ a layer of polycrystalline silicon ~~(60, 62)~~ is deposited on at least one ~~[[56, 58]]~~ of the two faces of a support ~~;(50), the method being characterized by the steps of:~~

embossing said face ~~[[52, 54]]~~ of the support ~~[[50]]~~ to impart thereto a shape that is complementary to said relief;

depositing said polycrystalline silicon layer ~~[[60, 62]]~~ on said embossed face ~~[[56, 58]]~~ of the support ~~[[50]]~~, the surface ~~[[64 or 66]]~~ of said polycrystalline silicon layer situated in contact with said embossed face ~~[[56 or 58]]~~ then taking on the shape of said relief;

cutting up said polycrystalline silicon layer ~~[[60 or 62]]~~; and

eliminating said support in order to obtain said polycrystalline silicon plate ~~[[68 or 70]]~~.

2. (currently amended) A method according to claim 1, ~~characterized in that~~ wherein said support ~~[[50]]~~ is a carbon tape.

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3. (currently amended) A method according to claim 2, ~~characterized in that~~ wherein said carbon tape is covered in a protective coating $[(56, 58)]$ of pyrolytic graphite after its surface $[(52, 54)]$ has been embossed in order to impart thereto said shape complementary to said relief.

4. (currently amended) A method according to ~~any preceding~~ claim 1, ~~characterized in that~~ wherein said face $[(46, 48)]$ of the support is embossed in order to impart thereto a shape complementary to said relief $[(44)]$ by being pinched between two rollers $[(30, 32)]$ and by causing said support $[(28)]$ to run between the rollers, the embossing surface of at least one of said rollers having the shape of said predetermined relief.

5. (currently amended) A method according to ~~any one of~~ claim $[[s]]$ ~~1 to 3~~, ~~characterized in that~~ wherein said support face is embossed to impart thereto a shape complementary to said relief by embossing a die against said support, the embossing surface of the die having the shape of a plane surface on which said predetermined relief has been embossed.

6. (currently amended) A method according to claim 4 ~~or claim 5~~, ~~characterized in that~~ wherein said surface of said roller $[(30, 32)]$ or of said die is made of a material selected from $[[:]]$ the group consisting of carbon; silicon carbide; silicon; and silicon nitride.

7. (currently amended) A method according to of claim 4 ~~or claim 6~~, ~~characterized in that~~

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wherein the embossing surfaces of the two rollers $[(30, 32)]$ have the shape of said relief, both faces $[(46, 48)]$ of said support $[(28)]$ then taking on the shape complementary to said relief $[(44)]$ during said pinching and running between said rollers.

8. (currently amended) A method according to claims 3 ~~and 7, characterized in that~~ wherein a polycrystalline silicon layer $[(88, 90)]$ is deposited simultaneously and continuously on both of the faces $[(74, 76)]$ of said tape $[(72)]$ by causing it to pass through a bath of molten silicon $[(80)]$ and by pulling it vertically upwards at constant speed $[(86)]$ so as to exit said bath, thereby obtaining two layers $[(88, 90)]$ of polycrystalline silicon, each having a surface with said relief.

9. (currently amended) A method according to ~~any preceding claim 1, characterized in that~~ wherein said support $[(28, 50, 72, 100)]$ is eliminated by being burnt off by heating the assembly ~~constituted by~~ of the support and the polycrystalline silicon to high temperature.

10. (currently amended) A method according to claim 9, ~~characterized in that~~ wherein the face $[(64, 66)]$ of the polycrystalline silicon that has the shape of said relief is cleaned after said support has been burnt off.

11. (currently amended) A method according to ~~any preceding claim 1, characterized in that~~ wherein said support $[(28, 50, 72, 100)]$ presents a thickness lying in the range 200 μm to 350 μm ; ~~and preferably in the range 200 μm to 300 μm .~~

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12. (currently amended) A method according to ~~any preceding claim 1, characterized in that~~ wherein the thickness of the polycrystalline silicon layer $[(68, 70, 88, 90)]$ lies in the range 40 μm to 300 μm .

13. (currently amended) A method according to claim 3, ~~characterized in that~~ wherein the thickness of said protective coating $[(56, 58)]$ is substantially equal to 1 μm .

14. (currently amended) A method according to ~~any preceding claim 1, characterized in that~~ wherein said face $[(46, 48, 52, 54)]$ of said support $[(28, 50)]$ is embossed in such a manner as to texture said face $[(64, 66)]$ of said polycrystalline silicon layer $[(68, 70)]$, said relief $[(44)]$ being selected in such a manner as to increase the probability of incident light being absorbed in said layer.

15. (currently amended) A method according to claim 14, ~~characterized in that~~ wherein said relief in the form of an array of substantially identical pyramids $[(14)]$.

16. (currently amended) A method according to claim 15, ~~characterized in that~~ wherein the side faces of each of said pyramids $[(14)]$ form angles that are substantially equal to 45° with the base of the pyramid.

17. (currently amended) A method according to claim 15 ~~or claim 16, characterized in~~

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~~that~~ wherein said pyramids ~~[[14]]~~ are of a height lying in the range 1 μm to 10 μm .

18. (currently amended) A method according to ~~any preceding claim 1, characterized in~~
~~that~~ wherein said face of said support ~~[[28, 50, 72, 100]]~~ is embossed in such a manner that said
surface of said silicon layer is marked with a pattern ~~characterizing~~ resembling said plate or a
series of polycrystalline silicon plates.

19. (currently amended) A method according to claim 18, ~~characterized in that~~ wherein
said pattern is a bar code.

20. (currently amended) A method according to claim 18, wherein said polycrystalline in
that said pattern is a number.

21. (currently amended) A method according to ~~any one of claim[[s]] 14 to 17 and 18 to~~
~~20, characterized in that~~ wherein said relief is ~~constituted~~ formed by the texturing said face of
said polycrystalline silicon layer and by said pattern ~~characterizing~~ resembling said plate.

22. (currently amended) A method according to ~~any preceding claim 1, characterized in~~
~~that~~ wherein said grooves are embossed in said face of said support ~~[[100]]~~ in such a manner
that ribs of shape complementary to the grooves are formed on said surface of the silicon layer,
thereby increasing the stiffness of said layer.

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23. (currently amended) A method according to claim 22, ~~characterized in that~~ wherein said grooves are of a depth of a few tens of micrometers.

24. (currently amended) A method according to claim 22 ~~or claim 23, characterized in that~~ wherein the greatest width of said ribs is no more than a few millimeters.

25. (currently amended) A method according to claim 2 ~~and any one of claims 22 to 24, characterized in that~~ wherein said ribs extend in the length direction of said tape ~~[[(100)]]~~.

26. (currently amended) A method according to claim 2 ~~and any one of claims 22 to 24, characterized in that~~ wherein said ribs extend in the width direction of said tape ~~[[(100)]]~~.

27. (currently amended) A method according to claim ~~[[s]] 25 and 26, characterized in that~~ wherein said relief is waffle-shaped, ~~being constituted by~~ having a grid of ribs in the length direction and in the width direction of said tape.

28. (currently amended) A method according to claim ~~[[s]] 7 and 25, characterized in that~~ wherein each of said rollers ~~[[(92, 94)]]~~ is made up of at least two knurling wheels ~~[[(102-108 and 118-124)]]~~ each having a face forming an embossing face, said knurling wheels being separated from one another by disks ~~[[(110-116 and 126-132)]]~~ each having a portion ~~[[(134)]]~~ projecting beyond the embossing faces of said knurling wheels, said embossing surfaces of the rollers being ~~constituted~~ formed by said embossing faces of said knurling wheels forming the

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texturing and/or the marking of said silicon layer, and said projecting portions [(134)] of said disk forming grooves [(136)] in the support tape [(100)] and forming said relief in the shape of ribs on the layers of silicon.

29. (currently amended) A method according to claim 18 ~~and claim 28, characterized in that~~ wherein each of said rollers [(92, 94)] is made up of a succession of knurling wheels [(102-108 and 118-124)] separated from one another by disks [(110-116 and 126-132)], each of said disks having a portion [(134)] projecting beyond the surfaces of said knurling wheels to create grooves [(136)] in the support tape [(100)], the spacing between said grooves [(136)] ~~constituting~~ forming said pattern ~~characterizing~~ resembling said plate or said series of polycrystalline silicon plates.

30. (currently amended) A method according to claim[s] 7 ~~and 26, characterized in that~~ wherein each of said rollers [(92, 94)] is made up of at least two knurling wheels revolving about an axis of rotation, each having a face forming an embossing face, at least one of said knurling wheels including longitudinal ribs [(134)] parallel to said axis of rotation.

31. (new) A method according to claim 11, wherein said support presents a thickness lying in the range of 200 μm to 300 μm .